DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 450 466 EA 030 886

TITLE	Early Childhood Education & the Elementary School Principal: Standards for Quality Programs for Young Children. Second Edition.
INSTITUTION	National Association of Elementary School Principals, Alexandria, VA.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	72p.; Funds for the publication of this Standards document were generously contributed by Lifetough, Inc., Minneapolis, MN.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Principals' Resource Center, NAESP, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3483 ($19.95). Tel: 800-386-2377 (Toll Free).
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; *Academic Standards; Benchmarking; Curriculum Development; *Curriculum Enrichment; Curriculum Evaluation; Developmentally Appropriate Practices; *Early Childhood Education; *Early Intervention; *Educational Quality; Educationally Disadvantaged; Elementary Education; *Parent School Relationship; Program Effectiveness; Total Quality Management
IDENTIFIERS	National Association Elementary School Principals

ABSTRACT

This second edition provides principals, teachers, and parents with new insight into early childhood education. Research underscores the importance of increasing emphasis on literacy and language acquisition, using assessment tools effectively, expanding community linkages, meeting the needs of a diverse student body, balancing academic and emotional learning, and infusing new technology into curriculum and instructional practices. Quality indicators for the organization include a continuing review of research, a public mission statement, scheduling practices reflecting developmental stages, grouping practices facilitating individual learning, and the allocation of sufficient time. Quality indicators for curriculum and instruction include balancing and integrating of all learning areas, varying teaching strategies, providing adequate materials, and creating a stimulating environment. Quality indicators for personnel include a knowledgeable principal who collaborates with key groups, programs, and agencies. Quality indicators for assessment and accountability include an approach consistent with developmental philosophy and research, a school, that is ready for children, and principals who support the implementation and management of programs. Quality indicators relating to parents include sustained communication, partnerships with schools, program involvement, and a principal who works with the community to address unique needs and situations. Quality indicators relating to the community include staff who understand the impact of culture and home environment on learning, provisions for child care, and a principal who works to ensure a smooth transition into public schools. Appendix A provides a checklist of quality indicators, and Appendix B provides a planning guide for school improvement. (Contains 46 references.) (TEJ)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 450 466

Early Childhood Education & The Elementary School Principal

Standards for Quality Programs for Young Children

Second Edition

EA 030 886

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
W. T. Greenleaf
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Early Childhood Education & The Elementary School Principal

Standards for Quality Programs for Young Children

Second Edition

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 98-067457

Copyright © 1998 by the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Executive Director: Samuel G. Sava
Associate Executive Director of Programs: Ronald J. Areglado
Director of Programs: Merrie Hahn
Production: Nola Shelton

Funds for the publication of this Standards document were generously contributed by Lifetouch, Inc., of Minneapolis, Richard P. Erickson, Chief Executive Officer.

NAESP

National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3483

Printed in the United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword v

The Young Child at School 1

Organization 4

Curriculum and Instruction 10

Personnel 16

Assessment and Accountability 19

Parents 22

Community 27

Acknowledgements 31

Appendix A: Checklist for Quality Indicators 33

Appendix B: Planning Guide for School Improvement 56

References 64

FOREWORD

As public schools continue to expand education programs to include three- and four-year-old children, school leaders need a synthesis of the best research and practice to develop these programs and to enhance existing ones.

The development of early childhood education during the latter part of the 20th century has had a profound impact on very young children. Recognizing the importance of quality criteria for educating this population, in 1990 the National Association of Elementary School Principals published the first edition of *Standards for Quality Programs for Young Children: Early Childhood Education and the Elementary School Principal.* The document became an invaluable resource to thousands of principals who needed help both in creating classroom experiences for preschool-age children and in integrating these programs into their existing kindergarten and primary level structures.

To fulfill our objective of providing NAESP members with the best and most current information, the second edition of the *Standards* has been carefully reviewed and revised by a committee of exemplary principals and early childhood education experts. In turn, they invited a panel of distinguished reviewers to comment on their findings. This comprehensive approach has resulted in this revised edition, a resource that underscores:

- Increased emphasis on literacy and language acquisition;
- Appropriate use of assessment instruments and data;
- Creating stronger links with parents and community service providers;
- Sensitivity to the needs of a growing and culturally diverse student population;
- Balancing the academic and socioemotional learning needs of young children; and
- Infusing technology into the curriculum and instructional practices of teachers.

NAESP believes this second edition will serve principals, teachers, and parents well. As educators use these standards to strengthen their existing programs, we would be pleased to learn about your experiences and how we might improve on this document.

— National Association of Elementary School Principals

THE YOUNG CHILD AT SCHOOL

Since the initial publication in 1990 of NAESP's *Standards for Quality Programs for Young Children: Early Childhood Education and the Elementary Principal*, early childhood education programs have increased dramatically across the United States. Federal and state governments have legislated a wide range of early childhood programs and services and have allocated considerable funds to ensure that virtually all states have mandated kindergarten programs. In addition, full-day and part-time educational opportunities for children ages 3-4 now exist in great numbers.

Educators, policy makers, and parents welcomed the first edition of NAESP's *Early Childhood Standards* because they presented a clear set of guidelines and quality indicators for the appropriate education of young children, ages 3-8. This revised publication reflects the burgeoning knowledge about the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of young children and, as in the original edition, translates this contemporary research into concise and practical guidelines. As part of the revision process, NAESP convened a panel of distinguished early childhood educators, who reviewed the 1990 edition and recommended changes necessary to reflect best thinking about the nature and educational needs of young children and their families. The reviewers faced the realities of increased cultural diversity, as well as a shift in the structure of families and their economic necessities which added a dimension of urgency for quality all-day/every-day early childhood programs. They also focused on literacy and language acquisition, heightened public concern about student achievement, the development of comprehensive community service models that have become an integral part of many school programs, and the impact of technology on the lives of students and educators. The net effect of these influences on school systems has challenged school principals to effectively lead and coordinate the myriad programs and services now available to children and families.

This revision underscores the uniqueness and significance of a child's early years. It emphasizes a belief that families and educators must support each child's unique development, respect and celebrate individual differences, and promote each child's fundamental right to learn in a safe, educationally appropriate environment. It also emphasizes the interrelationships of how children learn, what type of learning is appropriate, and when it is best learned. Planning for the education of young children should be based on a blend of theory and practice that reflects how children develop and learn. Educational programs should always acknowledge young children as active and creative learners.

Student achievement will dominate much of the debate over the meaning of a quality education well into the 21st century. National goals for education have made readiness to learn a top priority. Accordingly, legislators have allotted considerable funding to the implementation of sound early childhood education programs. Principals, teachers, and community members who plan these programs will find that the revised standards carefully define the purpose of early childhood education. For example, research indicates that young children need to be regularly exposed to a wide range of experiences to enhance language development and create the necessary foundations for reading instruction.

Children in the age range of 3 to 8 acquire knowledge through direct sensory encounters with the world as well as through teacher-directed learning. Early childhood is a period of rapid mental growth and development, and children seek out the stimuli they need to nourish their developing mental abilities. Consequently, early childhood programs should consist of a variety of direct learning experiences for the most of the instructional day.

Young children should have a sound base of experiences that are essential for later learning, a strong sense of self-esteem, an excitement and curiosity for learning. Toward that end, early childhood programs must be based on the ways children learn; they must accommodate the individual child's specific developmental needs, abilities, and interests. Early childhood activities must include play and language activities that provide for varying rates of child development and learning.

Children in the early years develop meaning as a result of concrete encounters and experiences. Learning takes place primarily through sensory experiences and actions. It is essential that children be encouraged to explore, manipulate, create, dismantle, and reconstruct things in their environment. The cognitive and social development of children is best encouraged through collaboration with others, discussion, discovering the "how" and "why" of actions, restructuring and analyzing, and developing personal meaning by the application of what is learned.

The instructional program for young children needs to focus on experience, providing for active exploration of the environment, allowing for guided discovery, involving concrete experiences, and providing both structured and unstructured opportunities for play. Early childhood teaching must provide for child-initiated activities together with involvement with the teacher in planning, implementing, and evaluating their learning experiences. With young children, academic skills are developed and enhanced through programs in which there are both independent activities and small-group instruction.

Since the initial release of NAESP's *Early Childhood Standards* in 1990, public demand that schools be more accountable for student performance has become a strong issue. Proficient principals develop strategic

plans to develop and use appropriate measurement and assessment instruments and report results to their respective communities and media outlets. The primary purpose of a comprehensive accountability program is to measure individual performance, to guide educators' decisions for improving instruction, and to implement staff development activities. An effective early childhood education assessment program uses reliable and valid tools to determine each student's learning profile and relies on the use of portfolios and continuous observation, not standardized tests, to ascertain a child's academic and socio-emotional progress.

Through conventional professional development activities and application of new technologies, administrators and teachers must continually improve their knowledge of research on brain development, multiple intelligences, and social and emotional learning. They must use these findings to improve the level of instruction in classrooms. As the demand for early childhood teachers grows, principals must lend their support and expertise to developing high standards to guide the training of future early childhood educators. In addition, they must be staunch advocates for improving both the working conditions and compensation of current and prospective teachers, to ensure that licensed and highly skilled professionals work in our nation's classrooms.

Consistent with national efforts to implement site-based decision-making models, educators regularly involve parents, families, and other community members in school improvement initiatives. In many school districts, school officials work collaboratively with other organizations such as community health and social service agencies to provide a comprehensive array of programs to children and families. The emphasis on school readiness has also resulted in expanded educational opportunities for young children such as Head Start and private preschool programs. Both preschool and public school officials must establish sound programs to assure a smooth transition for students and families. School visits, newsletter exchanges, joint staff development activities, and family nights are several examples of effective planning and communication.

The education of young children has become a shared responsibility of families, schools, and other community groups. Elementary school principals have an important role in shaping the social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. Most experts agree that the early years of a child's formal education are fundamental to their future success as lifelong learners and contributing members of society. Skillful principals, in partnership with faculty and community members, will plan for and provide the necessary information and resources to assure that their schools offer an enriching, joyful, and meaningful experience for the millions of young children whose education they lead. NAESP believes this revision of its *Early Childhood Standards* will serve as a useful guide and invaluable resource to principals and other interested parties who dedicate their time and talents toward making schools places of excellence for children.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of a quality early childhood program arises from the school's educational philosophy and is designed to meet the needs of young children.

The school has a written statement of shared beliefs, mission, and goals consistent with those of the school district and developed cooperatively by school staff members and parents. While the mission is the basis of all decisions about the program, it is reviewed annually to reflect current research as well as results of program assessments.

Scheduling practices reflect an understanding of how young children learn. There is a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. Children are encouraged to move about, to play, and to explore, both individually and in small groups. Learning is unhurried, with transitions and interruptions kept to a minimum. Children are seldom or never pulled out of the classroom.

Class size reflects the recommendations of recent research. Classes for three-year-olds should include one professional and one paraprofessional for 16 or fewer students. For four- to five-year-olds, a 20:2 ratio is recommended. Grouping practices are designed to provide a variety of learning experiences for children, including cooperative learning, special interests, peer teaching, and cross-age groups.

To meet the social, emotional, and educational needs of young children, the school day includes at least five hours of instructional time for full-day kindergarten and primary level instruction. Half-day kindergarten should include at least three hours. For preschool, hours reflect family needs, district policies, and best practice. The teaching and planning day is eight hours and teachers are provided ten days in excess of instructional days for planning, conferences, and professional development. The principal encourages teachers to pursue staff development opportunities that will enable them to improve instruction and enhance learning.

Standard:
The organization and implementation of an early childhood program is based on a statement of shared beliefs, mission, and goals.

In a quality early childhood program, the philosophy is based on an interactive approach, an approach that views children as active learners experiencing hands-on exploration of many diverse materials, freedom of movement, and spontaneous conversation with teacher and classmates. The children are provided the optimal environment for learning in their own individual manner and at their individual level of development.

Quality Indicators:

- A review of recent research and literature is both continuous and evident in practice.
- A mission statement based on shared beliefs is developed cooperatively by parents and families, staff members, and community representatives, thus assuring a sense of ownership among those involved.
- The mission statement and beliefs are consistent with those of the school district.
- A copy of the mission statement and beliefs is posted and available to anyone interested.
- The mission statement is the basis of all decisions.
- An assessment of the current program has been conducted and the results are carefully considered in making changes.
- The mission statement is reviewed annually.

The planning and implementation of an integrated curriculum are made possible through flexible scheduling of instructional specialists, the consulting staff, and classroom teachers. The schedule takes into consideration the developmental needs of young children, allowing them time to explore, converse, move about, and play.

Standard:
Scheduling practices reflect the developmental stages of children ages 3-8.

Quality Indicators:

- Blocks of time are scheduled in such a way that the children can become absorbed in their learning experiences without being interrupted.
- The schedule provides a balance of:
  - Teacher-directed and meaningful child-initiated activities;
  - Active and quiet activities;
  - Independent and guided activities; and
  - Large-group, small-group, and individual activities.
- Programs or activities that pull children out of the classroom are minimal or nonexistent.
- About one-third of the day is allowed for child-initiated, teacher-planned activities.
- Extended-day/full-day programs provide a learning environment that supports all areas of children's development and learning and resists the inclination to increase academic pressures.
- Instructional specialists collaborate with the classroom staff to prepare and deliver instruction appropriate for the particular children involved.
- Transitions between activities flow at children's individual pace and are kept to a minimum.

Standard:
The principal promotes research-based recommended class size.

Quality Indicators:

- As recommended by recent research, children are assigned to a class in accordance with the following ratios:
  - For three-year-olds: 16:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students);
  - For four- to five-year-olds: 20:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students); and
  - For six- to eight-year-olds: 15:1.
- Staff development is provided for teachers to enable them to enhance learning opportunities created by reduced class size.
- The principal evaluates the effectiveness of the following changes in teaching practices in response to reduced class size:
  - Greater teacher/student interaction;
  - Greater individualization of instruction;
  - Increased student participation; and
  - Greater opportunities for small-group instruction.

Standard:
Grouping practices facilitate the individual student's total development and learning.

Students aged 3-8 learn more readily in small groups.

Quality Indicators:

- The teachers regularly employ alternative grouping strategies (*i.e.*, cooperative learning groups, interest groups, short-term skill groups, peer teaching groups, cross-age groups).
- Groups should be flexible and vary in size consistent with the learning activity.
- Class size is maintained at the following ratios:
  - Three-year-olds: 16:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students);
  - Four- to five-year-olds: 20:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students); and
  - Six- to eight-year-olds: 15:1.
- The grouping practices employed allow for child-initiated activities.
- The grouping patterns foster positive self-esteem; social and emotional learning; and cognitive, language, and physical development.
- Appropriate pacing of learning activities enhances learning.

Standard:
Sufficient time is allocated to meet all educational needs of children.

Quality Indicators:

- For kindergarten, at least five hours of instructional time, exclusive of recess and the lunch period, are provided. The instructional time for less-than-full-day kindergarten is prorated.
- The school year includes a minimum of 180 instructional days.
- The teaching and planning day is typically eight hours.
- Teachers are provided at least ten days in excess of student instructional days, which are used for staff development, planning, and conferences.
- Interruptions during academic learning time are kept to a minimum.
- For preschool, hours vary according to family needs and to policies governing time and organization of these programs. The hours support continuity of experiences for children.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

In a quality early childhood program, curriculum development involves staff, parents and families, and appropriate representatives of the community.

The curriculum defines what the students are to learn; the skills they are to master; the concepts they are to develop; and the values, attitudes, habits, and feelings they are to acquire. Further, the curriculum includes the day's routines and activities, including grouping practices, schedules, classroom management, and the physical and social learning environment.

Above all, the curriculum responds to the differing learning and developmental needs of young children. Each decision about the curriculum is made in light of what is best for the particular children being served—the teacher adapts for the ages and experiences of the individual learners. The following principles, based both on first-hand, day-to-day experience and extensive research into how young children learn, are taken as fundamental:

1. Throughout the preschool years and into the primary grades, the curriculum should be presented in an integrated format rather than in 10- or 20-minute time segments for each content area. Curriculum should reflect a conceptual organization that helps children make sense of their experiences.

2. Children in preschool through primary grades should be engaged in active—rather than passive—learning activities. The curriculum must be seen as more than a program purchased from a publisher.

3. Spontaneous play, either alone or with other children, is a natural way for young children to learn to interact with one another and to understand their environment; play should be valued and supported in the program plan.

4. Because children come to school with different knowledge, concepts, and experiences, it is important that new learning be connected to something that is known and relevant.

The principal must provide strong leadership to ensure that curriculum makes the best use of each child's natural curiosity, abilities, and interests, and that it builds on prior learning. The task includes curriculum planning, implementation, securing appropriate resources of money and time to support it, and monitoring its success through an established evaluation system. The principal ensures that the curriculum provides opportunities for all children to develop to their greatest potential in a manner that is consistent with what we know about how young children learn and develop. That knowledge moves us back to the fundamentals of child development and emphasizes the belief that all children can learn.

An integrated approach to curriculum recognizes that content areas in instruction are naturally interrelated, as they are in real-life experiences. In the resulting integrated curriculum, learning is regarded as a process rather than a collection of facts. Learning is enhanced by the application of current technologies.

Standard:
The content of the curriculum reflects a balance of all areas of learning offered in an integrated manner and reflecting the holistic nature of learning.

Quality Indicators:

- Life experiences are used as a basis for learning.
- Language acquisition and development are experience-based.
- Content is responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children.
- Spoken and written language skills interact and influence each other.
- Children learn about reading and writing both by observing and applying these skills.
- Writing and reading are taught simultaneously and are experienced as an integrated part of the total curriculum.
- Children hear and read various types of culturally diverse literature.
- Children understand that the purposes of reading are to construct meaning and to experience enjoyment.
- The reading program includes a balance of systematic code instruction (alphabetic principles, spelling, phonemic awareness) and meaningful connected reading (reading, writing, and appreciation of literature).
- Children's progress in reading is continuous, and materials are provided at a variety of ability levels in each classroom.
- Children's progress in writing is continuous and based on identified levels of proficiency.
- Independent writing and reading practice is scheduled each day.
- Numbers and numeration are developed through manipulation of concrete objects and are understood by the children before they move to operations.
- Development of logical thinking and problem solving is fostered.
- Many opportunities are made available for children to explore, investigate, discover, and write about mathematics.

- Relationships among mathematical skills and concepts are emphasized.
- Concepts, dispositions, and the acquisition of skills are addressed in an integrated fashion; content is not presented as isolated bits of knowledge.
- Children are regularly and frequently involved in scientific inquiry and investigation.
- Creative expression is developed through art, music, drama, dance, and movement.
- Character development is taught through modeling and role playing, and is integrated into real-life experiences.
- Play is respected as an appropriate way of learning.
- Content is conceptually organized to include activities in all areas of the curriculum (*e.g.*,language arts, social studies, physical education, creative dramatics, music, art, science, math, or any combination of these) rather than short periods of time spent on each subject area.

Standard:
The teacher uses varied and effective teaching strategies, depending on the developmental levels and unique needs of the children.

The well-designed early childhood program is based on the premise that the thinking processes of young children are emerging and forming. They are also qualitatively different from those of older children. Young children acquire knowledge by manipulating, exploring, experimenting, and thinking reflectively about real objects.

Quality Indicators:

- Teachers meet the needs of children at their unique levels of development and ability.
- Teachers present information in multi-sensory ways.
- Teachers assist children to refine their thinking skills as they complete a project or task.
- Teachers create a classroom environment that gives the children many opportunities for exploration, reflective thinking, and practice with concepts and situations to apply what they learn.
- Teachers arrange for developmentally appropriate activities and materials that provide concrete, experiential learning.
- Teachers use instructional strategies that promote interaction with the other children and expose the children to a variety of materials.
- Teachers use questioning techniques that lead children to higher levels of thinking.
- Teachers plan and encourage meaningful, purposeful conversation, which contributes to language development.
- Teachers employ instructional strategies adapted to the pupils' learning styles, levels of development, and unique needs, capitalizing on the youngsters' spontaneity and intellectual excitement.
- The students work primarily in small groups. Most direct instruction is also done in small, flexible groups or one-on-one as teachers interact with the children.
- The teaching strategies include integrated, theme-centered, and project-centered units of learning involving three or more integrated content areas.
- Positive guidance techniques (*e.g.*, redirection, reinforcement, encouragement) help develop self-discipline and self-esteem.
- Teachers discuss and illustrate logical thinking skills, toward helping the students develop sound decision-making and problem-solving techniques.
- Teachers model the rewards of lifelong learning.
- Teachers model the use of current technologies.

Standard:
Classroom materials and equipment are appropriate to the developmental levels and unique needs of the children involved.

Learning takes place as children touch, manipulate, and think about objects, experiences, and people. As they develop, they move from concrete activities and materials to those that are representational.

Quality Indicators:

- The classroom contains concrete materials and objects that the children can think about and manipulate.
- There are choices available for a variety of hands-on activities.
- Multi-sensory media are used by students in groups and individually.
- Equipment and materials needed for large- and small-muscle development are used throughout the day.
- Equipment and materials are open-ended (blocks, science materials, paint) and lend themselves to a variety of activities.
- There are ample materials useful for involvement in the arts.
- The budget reflects support for a wide range of special experiences (field trips, visits, hands-on activities).
- A balanced reading program is established that includes systematic code instruction (alphabetic principle, spelling, phonemic awareness) and meaningful connected reading (reading, writing, and appreciation of literature). A wide variety of children's literature is available.
- The materials and equipment are:
  - Safe and in good repair;
  - Readily accessible to children for self-selection;
  - Age-appropriate;
  - Size-appropriate;
  - Durable;
  - Adaptable and inclusive for all children, including those with special and developmental needs; and
  - Available for group and individual use.

Standard:
A positive, responsive, and caring environment promotes the interaction of children with materials, other children, and adults.

The teacher establishes a positive learning environment that is adaptable, flexible, and welcoming. Learning centers are used to provide for children's choices. Materials are available, and children feel that they belong and have a sense of community.

Quality Indicators:

- The classroom environment provides for children's purposeful movement.
- Learning centers:
  - Allow children to make choices based on individual differences;
  - Capitalize on children's individual interests;
  - Are appropriate for a wide range of developmental capabilities;
  - Allow for movement;
  - Provide for a variety of challenges; and
  - Enhance the development of independence.
- The environment is filled with meaningful print and visually rich materials.
- The arrangement of the room's furniture allows for flexible grouping.
- There is an area where a child can be alone.
- The environment provides for students' purposeful interaction with one another while involved with materials or during the day's activities.
- The learning environment is child-centered, safe, comfortable, and adaptable to children's unique needs.
- The classroom is physically attractive. Student work and materials are displayed at children's eye level.
- There is a rest area with pillows and carpeting.
- The teacher uses a wide variety of teaching strategies to support student learning.

PERSONNEL

Quality early childhood programs are staffed at all levels by people who have specific training and experience in working with children in the age range of 3 to 8.

State regulations regarding certification requirements are complex and varied. Therefore, we provide the following general statement regarding staff qualifications:

> The principal encourages all members of the staff (instructional specialists, support staff, and consultants) to expand their knowledge and skills in the area of early childhood education—and provides professional development opportunities that enable them to do so.

In addition to possessing strong skills as an instructional leader, supervisor, and manager, the principal should have:

- A background that includes course work in child development and areas of cultural and linguistic diversity;
- Demonstrated proficiency in understanding how young children (ages 3-8) learn; and
- Broad expertise in instructional and management strategies specifically applicable to young children, not simply children in general or those in middle or upper grades.

Standard:
The principal is knowledgeable about quality early childhood programs and is effective in explaining, organizing, and implementing them.

The principal has responsibility for:

Taking the lead in articulating the mission and beliefs of the early childhood program and the rationale behind them;

Assuring the availability of appropriate curriculum and assessment materials and techniques;

Assembling an appropriately trained and qualified staff;

Stimulating parent involvement in the program; and

Arranging collaboration with other community agencies and programs that work with young children and their families.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal applies expertise in early childhood education when selecting, recruiting, evaluating, and guiding the teachers and other staff.
- The principal provides instructional materials that are appropriate to the children's age and developmental levels and recognizes that they may be different from middle and upper grades.
- The principal conveys high expectations for students, teachers, and other staff members.
- The principal uses appropriate disciplinary techniques to help children take responsibility for their own behavior.
- The principal facilitates an ongoing curriculum evaluation process that considers current ideas and trends in early education and findings of current research.
- The principal provides ample opportunities for all staff members to benefit from professional development and training specific to early childhood programs.
- The principal meets frequently with the early childhood staff.

Standard:
The principal collaborates with other groups, programs, and agencies in the community to provide all needed services for children and their families.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal specifically allocates time for explaining and discussing the early childhood program with the staff, the school board, and the larger community.
- The principal arranges for staff members to visit and interact with early childhood teachers and programs elsewhere in the community.
- The principal has assembled a file of information about a variety of agencies in the community that provide social, health, and other services to children and families.
- The principal collaborates with those agencies so that relevant information may be provided to families.

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Quality early childhood programs readily accept the principle of accountability.

The performance of the overall program and of the staff and students is regularly assessed as a basis for expanding on successes and correcting shortcomings. Plans for improvement are formulated, implemented, and reviewed regularly, to continue to improve all aspects of the program.

In measuring performance, the principals of schools offering quality early childhood programs are knowledgeable about the most effective methods and techniques of assessment and evaluation, and continuously strive to refine these processes. In doing so, they adhere to the following general principles:

- All children have equal access to the program. Individual assessment is used for planning instruction.
- Individual student progress is evaluated frequently. Assessments are ongoing and performance-based—*e.g.*, anecdotal observations, checklists, and journal entries. Results are used for planning individualized instruction.
- Many sources of information are used when making decisions regarding such matters as enrollment, placement, or remedial support services; decisions are never based on a single test score.
- The following instructional strategies should be considered as alternatives to retention:
  - Multiage groups;
  - Looping;
  - Extended school day/year;
  - Tutoring; and
  - Coordinated home involvement.
- Standards for the annual evaluation of teachers are consistent with the early childhood program's philosophy and goals.
- Administrators regularly undertake self-assessments, and these contain items specifically bearing on the performance and progress of the early childhood program.
- There is a plan for monitoring the implementation of the early childhood program.

Standard:
The principal institutes an approach to student assessment that is consistent with developmental philosophy, curriculum, and positions taken by other professional associations involved with the appropriate testing of young children.

Most norm-referenced tests do not reflect developmental theory and practice. They measure isolated skills and emphasize academic knowledge only and should not be used. However, *performance*-based assessments that influence effective instructional practices are appropriate and necessary.

Quality Indicators:

- Letter grades are not used to report student progress to parents. Rather, the staff shares information derived from such sources as recorded observations, interviews, samples, and examples of student work.
- Student progress is defined in terms of individual development and learning, rather than by comparisons with other children or against an arbitrary set of criteria.
- Overall assessments of student progress are cooperative efforts between teachers, parents, and children.
- No major decisions regarding a child's placement or progress are made on the basis of a single test score.

The principal is responsible for the coordination of the policies and procedures and for sharing information obtained in the evaluation process. The principal is responsible for accurate interpretation and reporting of assessment results.

Standard:
The school is ready for the children, rather than expecting children to be ready for the school.

Quality Indicators:

- Entry-level testing or screening is not used for exclusion from the program. Children are admitted to kindergarten solely on the basis of whether they meet state entrance age requirements.
- Teachers adapt curriculum to meet the learning needs of all children.

Standard:
The principal demonstrates understanding of quality early childhood programs and provides for the implementation, support, and management of such programs.

Quality Indicators:

- Teachers are provided opportunities for keeping abreast of the continuing advances in early childhood education.
- The principal is committed and persuasive in protecting the program from pressures to make it more rigid or more like programs for older children.
- The principal conducts periodic self-assessment of the components of early childhood programs by using the evaluation guidelines in this document (*see Appendix A*).
- Evaluation statements and reactions are regularly solicited from teachers and parents and are used to improve the program.
- All aspects of the program (*i.e.*, beliefs, curriculum, evaluation techniques, staff development activities, and parent involvement) are reviewed annually.

PARENTS

Parent involvement is of basic importance to the success of all elementary school programs. For an early childhood program, it is crucial and should be a high priority for the principal.

In forming a long-term partnership with parents and families, the principal and staff create a caring atmosphere. As a result, parents recognize that the school is a nurturing, supportive place for their child and that they can approach the principal and staff with any concerns.

The principal and the staff form partnerships with parents and families in which:

- Parents share development of the school's educational program, and so understand and support it. In meetings, newsletters, conversations, and other ways, the principal and staff provide information about the developmental philosophy of the program and its goals.
- Parents are helped to increase their effectiveness in working with their children, both at school and in the home, through their involvement in the school's work and their participation in classrooms, meetings, and conferences.
- Parent concerns regarding parenting and their individual performance as parents are addressed both formally and informally—through conferences, newsletters, workshops, and in personal conversations.
- Parents are actively involved in the school site council, making decisions about the program.
- A reciprocal relationship is formed and nurtured. Teachers recognize that parents have valuable information to share about their children. All parties seek to make both school and home places where young children feel secure and enjoy success.

The principal and staff work in collaborative partnerships with parents and families, establishing and maintaining ongoing two-way communication.

Standard:
The principal assures that there is regular, sustained communication between home and school.

Quality Indicators:

- Site councils made up of staff and parents work collaboratively in developing a strategic plan that is shared with the community and reviewed annually.
- The principal works with the staff to design and implement a range of communications strategies, such as calendars, phone calls, notes home, weekly teacher letters, newsletters, visits, and parent surveys and evaluations, all of which emphasize positive interaction.
- Parents and staff communicate in an open, honest, and productive environment in a variety of ways, including visits, notes, surveys, the school newsletter and Web site, and e-mail.
- There are activities that promote closer home/school relationships.

Standard:
The principal and staff will actively seek parental involvement and will establish partnerships with parents and families.

Quality Indicators:

- The school's mission statement emphasizes active parent involvement.
- Family and parent volunteers participate in orientation programs and training sessions that provide them with ongoing support.
- Volunteer opportunities include:
  - Site councils, PTAs, PTOs, and other organizational committees;
  - Assisting in classrooms as tutors, readers, listeners, and field trip chaperones; and
  - Assisting in office or library operations, or in keeping attendance records.

Standard:
The school supports parents and families in making decisions regarding their parenting skills and their children's development.

Principals and community agencies work collaboratively with parents and families to support them and their children.

Quality Indicators:

- Through a variety of approaches, including home visits, newsletters, phone conversations, and conferences, the school emphasizes current research about child development and learning, including the following:
  - Parents are a child's first and most important teachers.
  - Every opportunity should be used to guide and encourage a child's curiosity.
  - Children should be helped to respect cultural, gender, and linguistic differences.
  - It is important to encourage and recognize a child's accomplishments.
  - Children learn best in a family context where they are protected, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically safe.
  - Children are active learners, drawing on physical and social experiences, as well as culturally transmitted knowledge, to construct their own understanding.
- Information is shared on how to provide a home environment in which:
  - The child is nurtured in a positive, supportive, caring manner, and parents' expectations are consonant with the child's age and level of development.
  - Parents understand the importance of play in children's development and learning.
  - Developmentally appropriate materials are available to the child to stimulate curiosity and exploration.
  - The child gets the amount of rest and sleep needed for proper development.
  - Parents read to the child daily.
  - Parents specifically reserve a period of time to spend with the child each day, during which they concentrate on listening and encouraging conversation.
  - Parents try to provide the child with some "personal" space.
  - Parents recognize good nutrition as crucial to the child's physical and mental health and provide nutritionally sound meals and snacks.

Standard:
The principal works with the home and the community toward supporting transitions and addressing unique needs and situations.

Schools and early childhood programs provide for transition meetings, home visits, observations of children with unique needs in their present and future settings, and planning for future instruction.

Quality Indicators:

- Information sessions are held regularly to inform parents and other members of the community about the progress of the early childhood program and any planned changes.
- When an individual child would be affected by a planned change, personal conversations are held with the child's parents to discuss reasons for the proposed change, and parents are involved in making decisions regarding their child.
- The school is in close contact with other early childhood programs in the community (such as Head Start, nursery schools, and child care centers) to assure a smooth transition.
- The school provides diagnostic screening for children to determine if special services are needed; works with the appropriate office or group to assure the provision of those services, and arranges for their continuation in planning the child's placement.

Standard:
Parent/teacher conferences are integrated into the early childhood education process.

Parents must share in their children's education and progress, and in decisions regarding placement. Both the effectiveness and the efficiency of early childhood programs are closely tied to mutual parent/school planning and decision making.

Quality Indicators:

- The school provides inservice training for teachers in conducting effective parent/teacher conferences and other forms of communication between the home and school.
- The staff makes frequent contact with parents through telephone calls, letters, or visits—to discuss progress, and in particular, to pass along positive information and comments.
- Concerns about instructional or behavioral matters are discussed without delay.
- Formal parent/teacher discussions are scheduled regularly, at times and days accommodated to the parents' and teachers' work schedules.
- The principal is always available to participate in parent/teacher conferences if requested.

In quality early childhood programs, the focus is not just on the child, but on the family as a unit, with the child's progress and development influenced by the circumstances and needs that exist in the home and community.

Such a focus requires, among other things, that the school be knowledgeable about the various community agencies concerned with supporting the family—covering matters from medical and social services to child care and economic needs—and have established collaborative relationships with them.

The number of young children attending programs such as Head Start, nursery schools, and child care is increasing, and public school is no longer their first group experience. Schools can collaborate with these programs to ensure a smooth transition to public school for children and their families.

The agencies and institutions involved in providing early childhood education have responsibilities to help meet children's needs, and will be more successful in that endeavor if they work together.

In general, three considerations underscore the importance of collaboration and coordination among the groups and institutions involved in the education of young children:

- Changing families have changing needs that require schools to deal with more than children's academic education.
- Continuity of programming pays significant dividends; children are going to achieve far more if there are clear links between facilities, grade levels, and programs.
- The learning experiences and general progress of young children will be far more productive when there is collaboration among public and private agencies, legislative bodies, civic organizations, and concerned businesses.

The quality early childhood program sees the child in terms of the family, and seeks to provide comprehensive services, working with other entities in the community to serve children's total needs.

As a result, the early childhood program views children within the context of their families and culture, and seeks to provide comprehensive services through collaboration with other community organizations and groups. Families are linked with a range of services, based on identified resources, priorities, and concerns.

Standard:
The principal and staff understand that children's home, community, and cultural experiences impact on their development and learning.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal collaborates with agencies in the larger community and other professionals concerned with children to support children's development, learning, and well-being.
- The principal cooperates with local, state, and federal agencies in maintaining a directory of child-focused community agencies and services, and assists in coordinating referrals to help families receive needed services.
- The principal and staff communicate with families in the child's home language (using translators, if needed) and encourage the active involvement of families in their children's transition to the school program.

Standard:
The principal recognizes the urgent need for child-care services and is in the forefront of community collaboration to provide those services.

With the increasing number of single-parent families and families in which both parents work, child care both before and after school has become a necessity. Parents—and the community in general—look to the elementary school and principal for leadership and guidance.

Quality Indicators:

- Through interviews, questionnaires, and observation, the principal maintains a continuing, documented assessment of the community's child-care needs.
- In concert with appropriate district officials, the principal regularly reviews the school transportation plan to assure that child-care programs are accessible to all children.
- The principal initiates collaborative relationships with approved child-care providers, and where possible, arranges to use school facilities for before- and after-school child care.
- The principal and staff maintain ongoing communication and cooperation with the staffs of child-care providers to assure a smooth transition from that setting to the school day.

Standard:
The principal works with preschool and child-care providers to assure a smooth transition into the public school.

Child-care and educational settings for three- and four-year-olds include family child-care homes, Head Start programs, child-care centers, and preschool programs. Providers include individual home-based providers, groups such as churches and religious organizations, community organizations, private companies, and government agencies. Effective transition is not a single event, but rather an ongoing process involving the child and family, as well as the sending and the receiving programs.

Quality Indicators:

- The school plays a pivotal role in ensuring a child's smooth transition from the child-care and education setting to the school.
- The principal monitors the sharing of developmental information about children as they pass from one level or program to ancther, to ensure continuity of programming between the school and community-based programs.
- The principal and staff invite parents and families to visit schoolwide events, orientation sessions, the child's new classroom, and to confer with the child's teacher.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NAESP acknowledges with deep appreciation the work of the outstanding committee chosen to undertake this revision of *Early Childhood Education and the Elementary School Principal.*

Mary Duru
Professional Development Specialist
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Washington, D.C.

Kenneth R. Hatch, Principal
Countryside Elementary School
Edina, Minnesota

John Lindley, Principal
Edwards Elementary School
Las Vegas, Nevada

Helen C. Martin, Principal
Ina E. Driscoll School
Wilton, Connecticut

Dorothy Molnar, Professor
Department of Education
Elms College
Chicopee, Massachusetts

Ronald J. Aregiado
Associate Executive Director of Programs
NAESP

Merrie Hahn
Director of Programs
NAESP

Jill A. Eaton, Principal, *Ex officio*
Walter Jackson Elementary School
Decatur, Alabama

Samuel G. Sava, *Ex officio*
Executive Director
NAESP

And we would again like to thank the individuals who contributed to the first edition of the *Standards.*

Carolyn Cummings
Erlinda Archuleta
Frederick N. Brown
Michael L. Carr
Kenneth R. Hatch
Douglas Hoffman
Margaret Hutchison
John S. Lindley
Helen C. Martin
Margaret A. Searle
Janet L. Wright
Neil J. Shipman

NAESP is also grateful to the distinguished educators named here for reviewing the *Standards* and for their counsel and comments.

Sue Bredekamp, Director of Professional Development
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Washington, D.C.

Shirley Moone Childs, Education Consultant
Connecticut State Department of Education
Middleton, Connecticut

George Colman, Chief
Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services
Connecticut State Department of Education
Middleton, Connecticut

Nancy Delin, Director
Early Childhood Family Education
Edina, Minnesota

Marsha Irvin, Superintendent
East Central Area
Las Vegas, Nevada

Joan Isenberg, Professor
Graduate School of Education
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia

Marjorie Kostelnik, Chair
Department of Family and Child Ecology
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

Anne Marie Leonard, Professor
Early Childhood Education and Psychology
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, Virginia

Michael Robison, Superintendent
Northwest Area
Las Vegas, Nevada

Maurice Sykes, Consultant
Washington, D.C.

Marian Vanarsdell
Leeds School
Leeds, Massachusetts

APPENDIX A

Checklist for Quality Indicators

The checklist on the following pages is intended to guide the review of each of the quality indicators included in *Early Childhood Education and the Elementary School Principal.*

Respondents are asked to identify the extent to which each of the quality indicators is evident within the school, according to the following scale: Always Evident, Usually Evident, Seldom Evident, or Not Evident. Specific definitions for these terms should be determined through consensus among those using the checklist.

In most cases, those using this checklist will find ready evidence of quality as they move through the school and classrooms. However, some quality indicators may require visits with the principal, teachers, other staff members, students, and/or parents to gain the required information, understanding, or evidence to make an accurate response.

In completing the checklist, it is important that the "comments or suggestions" section of each page be used to record specific information or perceptions that influenced the way in which the quality indicators were checked. After completing the checklist for each Standard, use this space again to identify and prioritize specific actions that might be taken relative to areas where improvement is needed. This will save time during later steps in the planning process.

Thoughtful observers should be able to identify each of the "Standards of Excellence" within every quality school. However, this may not be the case with the "quality indicators." The indicators help define the current status of a particular Standard and identify characteristics that might be considered in developing a school improvement plan.

By completing this checklist, you will gather the data needed to begin the improvement planning process suggested in Appendix B.

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM IS BASED ON A STATEMENT OF SHARED BELIEFS, MISSION, AND GOALS.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ A review of recent research and literature is both continuous and evident in practice.				
■ A mission statement based on shared beliefs is developed cooperatively by parents and families, staff members, and community representatives, thus assuring a sense of ownership among those involved.				
■ The mission statement and beliefs are consistent with those of the school district.				
■ A copy of the mission statement and beliefs is posted and available to anyone interested.				
■ The mission statement is the basis of all decisions.				
■ An assessment of the current program has been conducted and the results are carefully considered in making changes.				
■ The mission statement is reviewed annually.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

SCHEDULING PRACTICES REFLECT THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF CHILDREN AGES 3-8.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Blocks of time are scheduled in such a way that the children can become absorbed in their learning experiences without being interrupted.				
■ The schedule provides a balance of: • Teacher-directed and meaningful child-initiated activities; • Active and quiet activities; • Independent and guided activities; and • Large-group, small-group, and individual activities.				
■ Programs or activities that pull children out of the classroom are minimal or nonexistent.				
■ About one-third of the day is allowed for child-initiated, teacher-planned activities.				
■ Extended-day/full-day programs provide a learning environment that supports all areas of children's development and learning and resists the inclination to increase academic pressures.				
■ Instructional specialists collaborate with the classroom staff to prepare and deliver instruction appropriate for the particular children involved.				
■ Transitions between activities flow at children's individual pace and are kept to a minimum.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL PROMOTES RESEARCH-BASED RECOMMENDED CLASS SIZE.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ As recommended by recent research, children are assigned to a class in accordance with the following ratios: • For three-year-olds: 16:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students); • For four- to five-year-olds: 20:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students); and • For six- to eight-year-olds: 15:1.				
■ Staff development is provided for teachers to enable them to enhance learning opportunities created by reduced class size.				
■ The principal evaluates the effectiveness of the following changes in teaching practices in response to reduced class size: • Greater teacher/student interaction; • Greater individualization of instruction; • Increased student participation; and • Greater opportunities for small-group instruction.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

GROUPING PRACTICES FACILITATE THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT'S TOTAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The teachers regularly employ alternative grouping strategies (*i.e.*, cooperative learning groups, interest groups, short-term skill groups, peer teaching groups, cross-age groups).				
■ Groups should be flexible and vary in size consistent with the learning activity.				
■ Class size is maintained at the following ratios: • Three-year-olds: 16:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students); • Four- to five-year-olds: 20:2 (one professional and one paraprofessional for a class of 20 or fewer students); and • Six- to eight-year-olds: 15:1.				
■ The grouping practices employed allow for child-initiated activities.				
■ The grouping patterns foster positive self-esteem; social and emotional learning; and cognitive, language, and physical development.				
■ Appropriate pacing of learning activities enhances learning.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

SUFFICIENT TIME IS ALLOCATED TO MEET ALL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ For kindergarten, at least five hours of instructional time, exclusive of recess and the lunch period, are provided. The instructional time for less-than-full-day kindergarten is prorated.				
■ The school year includes a minimum of 180 instructional days.				
■ The teaching and planning day is typically eight hours.				
■ Teachers are provided at least ten days in excess of student instructional days, which are used for staff development, planning, and conferences.				
■ Interruptions during academic learning time are kept to a minimum.				
■ For preschool, hours vary according to family needs and to policies governing time and organization of these programs. The hours support continuity of experiences for children.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM REFLECTS A BALANCE OF ALL AREAS OF LEARNING OFFERED IN AN INTEGRATED MANNER AND REFLECTING THE HOLISTIC NATURE OF LEARNING.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Life experiences are used as a basis for learning.				
■ Language acquisition and development are experience-based.				
■ Content is responsive to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children.				
■ Spoken and written language skills interact and influence each other.				
■ Children learn about reading and writing both by observing and applying these skills.				
■ Writing and reading are taught simultaneously and are experienced as an integrated part of the total curriculum.				
■ Children hear and read various types of culturally diverse literature.				
■ Children understand that the purposes of reading are to construct meaning and to experience enjoyment.				
■ The reading program includes a balance of systematic code instruction (alphabetic principles, spelling, phonemic awareness) and meaningful connected reading (reading, writing, and appreciation of literature).				
■ Children's progress in reading is continuous, and materials are provided at a variety of ability levels in each classroom.				
■ Children's progress in writing is continuous and based on identified levels of proficiency.				
■ Independent writing and reading practice is scheduled each day.				
■ Numbers and numeration are developed through manipulation of concrete objects and are understood by the children before they move to operations.				
■ Development of logical thinking and problem solving is fostered.				
■ Many opportunities are made available for children to explore, investigate, discover, and write about mathematics.				

(Continued on next page.)

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM REFLECTS A BALANCE OF ALL AREAS OF LEARNING OFFERED IN AN INTEGRATED MANNER AND REFLECTING THE HOLISTIC NATURE OF LEARNING.

QUALITY INDICATORS

ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT

(Continued from previous page.)

- Relationships among mathematical skills and concepts are emphasized.
- Concepts, dispositions, and the acquisition of skills are addressed in an integrated fashion; content is not presented as isolated bits of knowledge.
- Children are regularly and frequently involved in scientific inquiry and investigation.
- Creative expression is developed through art, music, drama, dance, and movement.
- Character development is taught through modeling and role playing, and is integrated into real-life experiences.
- Play is respected as an appropriate way of learning.
- Content is conceptually organized to include activities in all areas of the curriculum (*e.g.*,language arts, social studies, physical education, creative dramatics, music, art, science, math, or any combination of these) rather than short periods of time spent on each subject area.

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE TEACHER USES VARIED AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES, DEPENDING ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS AND UNIQUE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Teachers meet the needs of children at their unique levels of development and ability.				
■ Teachers present information in multi-sensory ways.				
■ Teachers assist children to refine their thinking skills as they complete a project or task.				
■ Teachers create a classroom environment that gives the children many opportunities for exploration, reflective thinking, and practice with concepts and situations to apply what they learn.				
■ Teachers arrange for developmentally appropriate activities and materials that provide concrete, experiential learning.				
■ Teachers use instructional strategies that promote interaction with the other children and expose the children to a variety of materials.				
■ Teachers use questioning techniques that lead children to higher levels of thinking.				
■ Teachers plan and encourage meaningful, purposeful conversation, which contributes to language development.				
■ Teachers employ instructional strategies adapted to the pupils' learning styles, levels of development, and unique needs, capitalizing on the youngsters' spontaneity and intellectual excitement.				
■ The students work primarily in small groups. Most direct instruction is also done in small, flexible groups or one-on-one as teachers interact with the children.				
■ The teaching strategies include integrated, theme-centered, and project-centered units of learning involving three or more integrated content areas.				
■ Positive guidance techniques (*e.g.*, redirection, reinforcement, encouragement) help develop self-discipline and self-esteem.				
■ Teachers discuss and illustrate logical thinking skills, toward helping the students develop sound decision-making and problem-solving techniques.				
■ Teachers model the rewards of lifelong learning.				
■ Teachers model the use of current technologies.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

CLASSROOM MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS AND UNIQUE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN INVOLVED.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The classroom contains concrete materials and objects that the children can think about and manipulate.				
■ There are choices available for a variety of hands-on activities.				
■ Multi-sensory media are used by students in groups and individually.				
■ Equipment and materials needed for large- and small-muscle development are used throughout the day.				
■ Equipment and materials are open-ended (blocks, science materials, paint) and lend themselves to a variety of activities.				
■ There are ample materials useful for involvement in the arts.				
■ The budget reflects support for a wide range of special experiences (field trips, visits, hands-on activities).				
■ A balanced reading program is established that includes systematic code instruction (alphabetic principle, spelling, phonemic awareness) and meaningful connected reading (reading, writing, and appreciation of literature). A wide variety of children's literature is available.				
■ The materials and equipment are: • Safe and in good repair; • Readily accessible to children for self-selection; • Age-appropriate; • Size-appropriate; • Durable; • Adaptable and inclusive for all children, including those with special and developmental needs; and • Available for group and individual use.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

A POSITIVE, RESPONSIVE, AND CARING ENVIRONMENT PROMOTES THE INTERACTION OF CHILDREN WITH MATERIALS, OTHER CHILDREN, AND ADULTS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The classroom environment provides for children's purposeful movement.				
■ Learning centers: • Allow children to make choices based on individual differences; • Capitalize on children's individual interests; • Are appropriate for a wide range of developmental capabilities; • Allow for movement; • Provide for a variety of challenges; and • Enhance the development of independence.				
■ The environment is filled with meaningful print and visually rich materials.				
■ The arrangement of the room's furniture allows for flexible grouping.				
■ There is an area where a child can be alone.				
■ The environment provides for students' purposeful interaction with one another while involved with materials or during the day's activities.				
■ The learning environment is child-centered, safe, comfortable, and adaptable to children's unique needs.				
■ The classroom is physically attractive. Student work and materials are displayed at children's eye level.				
■ There is a rest area with pillows and carpeting.				
■ The teacher uses a wide variety of teaching strategies to support student learning.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL IS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND IS EFFECTIVE IN EXPLAINING, ORGANIZING, AND IMPLEMENTING THEM.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The principal applies expertise in early childhood education when selecting, recruiting, evaluating, and guiding the teachers and other staff.				
■ The principal provides instructional materials that are appropriate to the children's age and developmental levels and recognizes that they may be different from middle and upper grades.				
■ The principal conveys high expectations for students, teachers, and other staff members.				
■ The principal uses appropriate disciplinary techniques to help children take responsibility for their own behavior.				
■ The principal facilitates an ongoing curriculum evaluation process that considers current ideas and trends in early education and findings of current research.				
■ The principal provides ample opportunities for all staff members to benefit from professional development and training specific to early childhood programs.				
■ The principal meets frequently with the early childhood staff.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL COLLABORATES WITH OTHER GROUPS, PROGRAMS, AND AGENCIES IN THE COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE ALL NEEDED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The principal specifically allocates time for explaining and discussing the early childhood program with the staff, the school board, and the larger community.				
■ The principal arranges for staff members to visit and interact with early childhood teachers and programs elsewhere in the community.				
■ The principal has assembled a file of information about a variety of agencies in the community that provide social, health, and other services to children and families.				
■ The principal collaborates with those agencies so that relevant information may be provided to families.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL INSTITUTES AN APPROACH TO STUDENT ASSESSMENT THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH DEVELOPMENTAL PHILOSOPHY, CURRICULUM, AND POSITIONS TAKEN BY OTHER PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVED WITH THE APPROPRIATE TESTING OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Letter grades are not used to report student progress to parents. Rather, the staff shares information derived from such sources as recorded observations, interviews, samples, and examples of student work.				
■ Student progress is defined in terms of individual development and learning, rather than by comparisons with other children or against an arbitrary set of criteria.				
■ Overall assessments of student progress are cooperative efforts between teachers, parents, and children.				
■ No major decisions regarding a child's placement or progress are made on the basis of a single test score.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE SCHOOL IS READY FOR THE CHILDREN, RATHER THAN EXPECTING CHILDREN TO BE READY FOR THE SCHOOL.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Entry-level testing or screening is not used for exclusion from the program. Children are admitted to kindergarten solely on the basis of whether they meet state entrance age requirements.				
■ Teachers adapt curriculum to meet the learning needs of all children.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL DEMONSTRATES UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND PROVIDES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION, SUPPORT, AND MANAGEMENT OF SUCH PROGRAMS.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Teachers are provided opportunities for keeping abreast of the continuing advances in early childhood education.				
■ The principal is committed and persuasive in protecting the program from pressures to make it more rigid or more like programs for older children.				
■ The principal conducts periodic self-assessment of the components of early childhood programs by using the evaluation guidelines in this document.				
■ Evaluation statements and reactions are regularly solicited from teachers and parents and are used to improve the program.				
■ All aspects of the program (*i.e.*, beliefs, curriculum, evaluation techniques, staff development activities, and parent involvement) are reviewed annually.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL ASSURES THAT THERE IS REGULAR, SUSTAINED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Site councils made up of staff and parents work collaboratively in developing a strategic plan that is shared with the community and reviewed annually.				
■ The principal works with the staff to design and implement a range of communications strategies, such as calendars, phone calls, notes home, weekly teacher letters, newsletters, visits, and parent surveys and evaluations, all of which emphasize positive interaction.				
■ Parents and staff communicate in an open, honest, and productive environment in a variety of ways, including visits, notes, surveys, the school newsletter and Web site, and e-mail.				
■ There are activities that promote closer home/school relationships.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL AND STAFF WILL ACTIVELY SEEK PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND WILL ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The school's mission statement emphasizes active parent involvement.				
■ Family and parent volunteers participate in orientation programs and training sessions that provide them with ongoing support.				
■ Volunteer opportunities include: • Site councils, PTAs, PTOs, and other organizational committees; • Assisting in classrooms as tutors, readers, listeners, and • field trip chaperones; and • Assisting in office or library operations, or in keeping attendance records.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE SCHOOL SUPPORTS PARENTS AND FAMILIES IN MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING THEIR PARENTING SKILLS AND THEIR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT.

QUALITY INDICATORS

ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT

- Through a variety of approaches, including home visits, newsletters, phone conversations, and conferences, the school emphasizes current research about child development and learning, including the following:
  - Parents are a child's first and most important teachers.
  - Every opportunity should be used to guide and encourage a child's curiosity.
  - Children should be helped to respect cultural, gender, and linguistic differences.
  - It is important to encourage and recognize a child's accomplishments.
  - Children learn best in a family context where they are protected, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically safe.
  - Children are active learners, drawing on physical and social experiences, as well as culturally transmitted knowledge, to construct their own understanding.
- Information is shared on how to provide a home environment in which:
  - The child is nurtured in a positive, supportive, caring manner, and parents' expectations are consonant with the child's age and level of development.
  - Parents understand the importance of play in children's development and learning.
  - Developmentally appropriate materials are available to the child to stimulate curiosity and exploration.
  - The child gets the amount of rest and sleep needed for proper development.
  - Parents read to the child daily.
  - Parents specifically reserve a period of time to spend with the child each day, during which they concentrate on listening and encouraging conversation.
  - Parents try to provide the child with some "personal" space.
  - Parents recognize good nutrition as crucial to the child's physical and mental health, and provide nutritionally sound meals and snacks.

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL WORKS WITH THE HOME AND THE COMMUNITY TOWARD SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS AND ADDRESSING UNIQUE NEEDS AND SITUATIONS.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ Information sessions are held regularly to inform parents and other members of the community about the progress of the early childhood program and any planned changes.				
■ When an individual child would be affected by a planned change, personal conversations are held with the child's parents to discuss reasons for the proposed change, and parents are involved in making decisions regarding their child.				
■ The school is in close contact with other early childhood programs in the community (such as Head Start, nursery schools, and child care centers) to assure a smooth transition.				
■ The school provides diagnostic screening for children to determine if special services are needed; works with the appropriate office or group to assure the provision of those services, and arranges for their continuation in planning the child's placement.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROCESS.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The school provides inservice training for teachers in conducting effective parent/teacher conferences and other forms of communication between the home and school.				
■ The staff makes frequent contact with parents through telephone calls, letters, or visits—to discuss progress, and in particular, to pass along positive information and comments.				
■ Concerns about instructional or behavioral matters are discussed without delay.				
■ Formal parent/teacher discussions are scheduled regularly, at times and days accommodated to the parents' and teachers' work schedules.				
■ The principal is always available to participate in parent/teacher conferences if requested.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL AND STAFF UNDERSTAND THAT CHILDREN'S HOME, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IMPACT ON THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING.

QUALITY INDICATORS

	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
■ The principal collaborates with agencies in the larger community and other professionals concerned with children to support children's development, learning, and well-being.				
■ The principal cooperates with local, state, and federal agencies in maintaining a directory of child-focused community agencies and services, and assists in coordinating referrals to help families receive needed services.				
■ The principal and staff communicate with families in the child's home language (using translators, if needed) and encourage the active involvement of families in their children's transition to the school program.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL RECOGNIZES THE URGENT NEED FOR CHILD-CARE SERVICES AND IS IN THE FOREFRONT OF COMMUNITY COLLABORATION TO PROVIDE THOSE SERVICES.

QUALITY INDICATORS

ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT

- Through interviews, questionnaires, and observation, the principal maintains a continuing, documented assessment of the community's child-care needs.
- In concert with appropriate district officials, the principal regularly reviews the school transportation plan to assure that child-care programs are accessible to all children.
- The principal initiates collaborative relationships with approved child-care providers, and where possible, arranges to use school facilities for before- and after-school child care.
- The principal and staff maintain ongoing communication and cooperation with the staffs of child-care providers to assure a smooth transition from that setting to the school day.

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL WORKS WITH PRESCHOOL AND CHILD-CARE PROVIDERS TO ASSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

QUALITY INDICATORS

ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT

- The school plays a pivotal role in ensuring a child's smooth transition from the child-care and education setting to the school.
- The principal monitors the sharing of developmental information about children as they pass from one level or program to another, to ensure continuity of programming between the school and community-based programs.
- The principal and staff invite parents and families to visit schoolwide events, orientation sessions, the child's new classroom, and to confer with the child's teacher.

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

APPENDIX B

Planning Guide for School Improvement

This planning guide helps identify those Standards on which efforts for improvement should be focused. The steps to be followed are:

1. Using the data from the Appendix A checklist, make a judgment about the extent of improvement needed in each of the Standards according to the following scale: Minimal, Some, or Extensive. Specific definitions for these terms should be determined by consensus of those using the checklist. A review of the checklist and "comments or suggestions" listed in Appendix A provide the basis for making the judgment.

2. When the extent of "improvement indicated" for a Standard has been determined, identify by consensus three to five specific actions that might be taken to improve the school's performance in the Standard area. List these actions, using statements that clearly define measurable outcomes, in the space provided under "plan for improvement."

3. Once steps 1 and 2 have been completed for each of the Standards, prioritize the need for improvement in each Standard area. Consider the extent of improvement indicated in step 1 and the plan for improvement identified in step 2 to make priority judgments for each Standard area. It is important to give highest priority to those areas that will move the school toward desirable outcomes, and that you take time to build commitment from those who will be directly involved in implementing the improvement plan. In the appropriate box, indicate the priority assigned to each Standard, using 1 as the highest and 18 as the lowest.

4. The next step in the planning process is to set a target completion date for each of the specific plans. This will help you monitor and supervise the improvement plan, and it is vital in establishing accountability. It is important to target no more than three to five Standard areas for initial work, and to ensure that the number of specific plans for improvement is reasonable. (It is more sensible to set three or four substantive targets than six or eight of lesser importance.) Take care to establish a reasonable timeline for completion of the targeted activity if staff commitment to school improvement is to be sustained and the planning process is to succeed.

5. The next step is to identify the person(s) responsible for seeing that each specific plan is implemented. Use the space provided on the planning form to list such people.

6. The principal and/or implementation team should develop a master plan to be distributed to all staff members or displayed prominently so everyone remains mindful of the plan. This plan of action will guide staff members in their efforts to improve the quality of the school.

Maximum gains will be achieved when the principal provides strong leadership and monitors the plan regularly. Recognizing the changes, and celebrating the improvement outcomes as they are achieved, will help sustain staff morale and interest in the process.

ORGANIZATION

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The organization and implementation of an early childhood program is based on a statement of shared beliefs, mission, and goals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Scheduling practices reflect the developmental stages of children ages 3-8.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The principal promotes research-based recommended class size.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Grouping practices facilitate the individual student's total development and learning.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Sufficient time is allocated to meet all educational needs of children.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The content of the curriculum reflects a balance of all areas of learning offered in an integrated manner and reflecting the holistic nature of learning.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The teacher uses varied and effective teaching strategies, depending on the developmental levels and unique needs of the children.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Classroom materials and equipment are appropriate to the developmental levels and unique needs of the children involved.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

A positive, responsive, and caring environment promotes the interaction of children with materials, other children, and adults.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

PERSONNEL

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The principal is knowledgeable about quality early childhood programs and is effective in explaining, organizing, and implementing them.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The principal collaborates with other groups, programs, and agencies in the community to provide all needed services for children and their families.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
The principal institutes an approach to student assessment that is consistent with developmental philosophy, curriculum, and positions taken by other professional associations involved with the appropriate testing of young children.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The school is ready for the children, rather than expecting children to be ready for the school.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The principal demonstrates understanding of quality early childhood programs and provides for the implementation, support, and management of such programs.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

PARENTS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The principal assures that there is regular, sustained communication between home and school. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT** Person(s) Responsible _____					
The principal and staff will actively seek parental involvement and will establish partnerships with parents and families. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT** Person(s) Responsible _____					
The school supports parents and families in making decisions regarding their parenting skills and their children's development. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT** Person(s) Responsible _____					
The principal works with the home and the community toward supporting transitions and addressing unique needs and situations. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT** Person(s) Responsible _____					
Parent/teacher conferences are integrated into the early childhood education process. **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT** Person(s) Responsible _____					

COMMUNITY

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
The principal and staff understand that children's home, community, and cultural experiences impact on their development and learning.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The principal recognizes the urgent need for child-care services and is in the forefront of community collaboration to provide those services.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The principal works with preschool and child-care providers to assure a smooth transition into the public school.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

REFERENCES

Allington, R. L. & Walmsley, S. A. (1995). *No quick fix: Rethinking literacy programs in America's elementary schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Allington, R. L. & Cunningham, P. M. (1996). *Schools that work, where all children read and write.* New York: Harper Collins.

Armington, D. (1997). *The living classroom: Writing, reading and beyond.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Atwell, Nancie. (1987). *In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Avery, C. (1993). *And with a light touch.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Bialostok, S. (1992). *Raising readers: Help your child to literacy.* Winnepeg, Canada: Peguis Publishers.

Boyer, E.L. (1995). *The basic school: A community for learning.* Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C. (Eds.) (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs.* (Rev. Ed.) Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Calkins, L. (1994). *The art of teaching writing.* (New Ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cochrane, O. (1992). *Questions and answers about whole language.* Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.

Crafton, L. K. (1996). *Standards in practice: Grades K-2.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Cutting, B. *Getting started in whole language.* Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.

Daniels, H. (1994). *Literature circles.* York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

DeFord, D.; Lyons, C.; & Pinnell, G. S. (1991). *Bridges to literacy.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Depree, H. & Iversen, S. (1994). *Early literacy in the classroom: A new standard for young readers.* Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.

Duckworth, E. (1987). *"The having of wonderful ideas" and other essays on teaching and learning.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Eggleton, J. (1990).*Whole language evaluation: Reading, writing and spelling for the intermediate grades.* Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.

Elkind, D. (1993). *Images of the young child: Collected essays on development and education.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Ernst, K. (1994). *Picturing learning: Artists & writers in the classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ernst, K. (1996). *New entries: learning by writing and drawing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fisher, B. (1991). *Joyful learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fisher, B. (1995). *Thinking and learning together.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fletcher, R. (1993). *What a writer needs.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fraser, J. & Skolnick, D. (1994).*On their way: Celebrating second graders as they read and write.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fountas, I. C. & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Graves, D.H. (1994). *A fresh look at writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Griffiths, R.; Duncan, J.; Ward, R.; Hood, H.; Hervey, S.; & Bonallack, J. (1992). *Dancing with the pen: The learner as a writer.* Wellington, New Zealand: Richard Owen Publishers.

Hendrick, A. S.; Kaufmann, R.; & Messenger, K. P. (Eds.) (1995). *Healthy young children: A manual for programs —1995 edition.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Hindley, J. (1996). *In the company of children.* York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Katz, W. (1989). *Engaging children's minds: The project approach.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Koralek, D. G.; Colker, L. J.; & Dodge, D. T. (1993). *The what, why, and how of high-quality early childhood education: A guide for on-site supervision.* (Rev. Ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Kulik, A. & Massam, J. (1990). *And what else?* Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.

Laminack, L. & Wood, K. (1996). *Spelling in use.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Lane, B. (1993). *After "the end."* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Levin, D. E. (1997). *Remote control childhood? Combating the hazards of media culture.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Morrison, I. (1994). *Getting it together.* Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.

Morrison, I. (1994). *Keeping it together.* Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.

Newkirk, T. (1990). *To compose.* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

O'Leary, S. (1997). *Five kids: Stories of children learning to read.* Bothell, WA: The Wright Group.

Peterson, R. & Eeds, M. *Grand conversations: Literature groups in action.* Jefferson City, MO: Scholastic Books.

Routman, R. (1991). *Invitations.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, R. (1988). *Transitions: From literature to literacy.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Smith, F. (1995). *Between hope and havoc: Essays into human learning and education.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tierney, R.J.; Readence, J.E.; & Dishner, E.K. (1995). *Reading strategies and practice: A compendium.* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Traille, L. (1992). *Highlight my strengths.* Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby.